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ABSTRACT

Designed as a reference for teaching teamwork skills in the workplace, this manual presents teaching strategies and activities for beginning, intermediate, and advanced learners. Following an overview of the manual's purpose, definitions are provided of the three skill levels integrated into the activities, indicating that beginning activities raise awareness of the concept of teamwork, intermediate activities develop critical thinking skills, and advanced activities focus on applying consensus building and self-directed teams. Strategies and activities are then provided for building general knowledge regarding teamwork, including activities for defining teams, understanding team roles and behaviors that undermine teams, analyzing the company culture and structure, and understanding the characteristics of effective and high-performing teams. The next section presents strategies and activities for building teamwork skills through the use of jury simulation, the creation of commercials, trivial pursuit games, and other activities. The final section includes activities for teaching the importance of reflection and learning in creating effective teams, including activities related to using team goal cards and logs, creating charts to determine students' assumptions about team relationships, and developing self-directed work teams. (BCY)

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THE TEAMWORK

SOURCEBOOK

EPIC Workplace Learning Project, 1997
US Department of Education

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About The Teamwork Sourcebook

Being a competent team member involves more than just common sense. Competent team members bring both interpersonal and technical skills to their interaction on teams. This module deals with the interpersonal communication skills needed to be an effective team member and builds the following aspects of communication competence:

Knowledge
Knowledge of the teamwork process and specific teamwork procedures can help employees to contribute more effectively on teams. The first set of activities introduces participants to the concept of teamwork, roles of team members, and common practices on teams such as consensus decision-making.

Skills
Teamwork communication competence demands more than just knowledge; it also demands specific skills. For example, competent team members don't just know about the roles team members play—they exercise flexibility in being able to assume a variety of roles to help the team achieve its objective. The "Building Skills" section of this source book includes a variety of exercises that focus on the development and refinement of specific skills required on teams.

Reflection and Learning
Finally, effective team contributors are *reflective learners*. They think about their behavior on teams and take action to improve. They take risks as team members to speak up, to express concern, or provide support, and they reflect on the effectiveness of their behavior. They understand that communication is a process in which each participant has power to construct new possibilities. While all exercises included in this source book address reflection to a degree, the "Reflection and Learning" section includes exercises that focus on the processes of examining teamwork behavior and reflecting on growth and change through teamwork.

This sourcebook is grounded in our conviction that teamwork communication competence can be learned. We hope this book helps teachers design sessions that enable learners to improve their effectiveness on teams and increase their enjoyment of the team process. We welcome your comments and feedback!

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Definition of Levels

- Beginner Level

  Exercises and activities in this group are ones that raise awareness of the concept of teamwork and what it means to be on a team.

  An example of a beginner activity:

  Defining a Team: This activity raises students' awareness of the "team" concept--what a team is, who team members may be, and how a team may function.

- Intermediate Level

  Exercises and activities in this group require more advanced critical thinking and analysis skills needed to understand and build more effective teamwork skills.

  An example of an intermediate level activity:

  Pathways of Team Communication: This activity goes beyond defining teams to providing an experiential framework for understanding our own role on teams. The resulting sociogram contributes to an interesting discussion for further critical thinking and self-analysis.

- Advanced Level

  Exercises and activities in this group are ones that require students to focus on analyzing and applying more advanced teamwork concepts, such as consensus building and self-directed teams.

  An example of an advanced level activity:

  Jury Simulation: This activity is aimed at helping students understand and analyze the complexity of reaching consensus in a real-life situation.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE

Building Knowledge

As companies continue to move from a more hierarchical structure to a team-based structure, having an understanding of teams is becoming more and more critical. Being an effective team member starts with understanding the concept of teams, how to work as a team, and the different roles team members play.

This section provides activities to build student's knowledge of competent teamwork communication. Activities facilitate shared understanding of teams, team roles, and team culture in an organization. This shared understanding contributes to more competent and effective team members and, as a result, more productive and successful teams.

DEFINING A TEAM

Learning Goals:

- To understand the different teams that students belong to
- To define the term "team"

Level: ●

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 15 - 25 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Ask each student to write on a piece of paper his/her definition of the word "team." Have them also list which "teams" they belong to and the roles that they play on each of those teams. List on the board the best combined definition of the word "team" and have each participant discuss which team they feel they belong to:

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What do you first think of when you hear the word "team?" (athletic teams, work teams, etc.)
2. What are some of the differences in your definitions?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This discussion activity works as an excellent icebreaker in a team skills class. It also helps to expand peoples' ideas of what a team is.

References: None

ROLES ON TEAMS

Learning Goals:

- To introduce the concept of roles on teams
- To engage students in reflection related to their adaptability and flexibility in trying various roles

Level: ●

Group Size: 3 or more students

Time: 1 - 2 hours

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Roles on Teams*

Learning Activity:

Ask students to think of a recent time when they personally contributed to improve a team's functioning or when they observed a coworker contribute to the team. The incidents generated by the students from the discussion questions should provide examples of roles which contribute to group performance--task and relationship roles. Introduce the list related to the functions of competent group members.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Identify specifically what was helpful. What was the behavior?
2. How did you know it was helpful?

*** Variations**

Jigsaw Option: Divide the group into sub-groups (maximum 4 students per group). Give each group the handout on group roles. Ask each group to discuss and become an "expert" on one of the two roles. Direct each group to prepare to teach the rest of the class about the role by: 1) summarizing the role and its functions in your own words and 2) identifying specific examples of where the role is important. A second variation is to instruct the group that the presentation of the group's ideas will be randomly determined; each group should be prepared to present on all the group roles. (The instructor can randomly select groups by asking "the person with the oldest car" or "the person with the birthday closest to today" to present.)

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Remarks: None

References: None

ROLES ON TEAMS

If you watch teams in action, you will generally see two kinds of behaviors that help the team achieve its goal: task-related behavior and relationship-related behavior. Both are essential to strong teams. Effective team members can function in a variety of roles, depending on the needs of the team.

Task Roles are concerned with the accomplishment of the goals, mission, and objectives of the team. Behaviors related to task roles include the following:

- Giving information: offering facts, beliefs, personal experience or other input
- Seeking information: asking for additional input or clarification about ideas that have been suggested
- Elaborating or clarifying ideas: offering further clarification of ideas or opinions presented by others
- Initiating interaction: helping the team to get started on the task by stating the task, proposing a solution, giving new ideas, giving a new definition of an issue, or providing a new way of approaching a problem
- Administrating: keeping people focused on the important issues and keeping the team aware of time
- Orienting and summarizing: providing reviews of ideas presented and past decisions or actions made by the group
- Consensus testing: asking whether or not the group is ready to make a decision or reach a tentative decision

Relationships Roles contribute to the ability of the group to create and maintain the group as a whole. This includes creating supportive, open, and positive interpersonal relationships. Behaviors related to relationship roles include the following:

- Harmonizing: reducing tension in the group by settling differences among members and introducing humor to the group on occasion
- Supporting and encouraging: giving praise or agreement with statements or questions raised by other group members
- Gatekeeping: working to involve each member, trying to include those that are reluctant to speak up, and channeling the flow of interaction between and around group members
- Establishing and expressing group feelings: speaking up to express group feelings, moods, or relationships, as well as asking for group members' feelings about issues

ANTI-GROUP ROLES

Learning Goals:

- To introduce the concept of the "anti-group" role
- To identify characteristics of destructive roles on teams
- To learn how to channel negative ideas and feelings to support, rather than derail, the team

Level: ■

Group Size: 3 or more students

Time: 45 - 75 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Anti-group Roles*

Learning Activity:

Review the two major roles that contribute to strong teams: task and relationship roles. Review the need for both roles and the need for team members to be able to be flexible in performing a variety of roles.

Introduce the concept of "anti-group" roles. These are behaviors that do not contribute to the group's ability to succeed at a task. Handout *Anti-group Roles*. Generate additional examples of "favorite expressions" that illustrate these roles in action.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Why do people sometimes insist on playing the more destructive roles in groups?

2. What communication competencies are lacking in team members who assume these roles...
   - what knowledge about team communication may they be lacking?
   - what motivation to communicate effectively may be missing?
   - what skills (specific behaviors such as the ability to listen actively) may be missing?

3. How can a team handle individuals who exhibit anti-group behaviors? (provide constructive feedback, set standards for behavior, etc.)

4. How are anti-group behaviors different from constructive conflict on teams? (Anti-group conflict is typically not focused on the issues; rather, it concerns attacking individuals. Constructive conflict focuses on bringing critical questions to light.)

*** Variations**

One important aspect of dealing with anti-group behavior is the ability to accept and give constructive feedback. One variation is to combine this lesson with practice on giving constructive feedback and listening to feedback to improve performance.

It is also important to contrast anti-group roles with critical thinking on teams. Another variation is to include some information on "Groupthink" to help students understand the difference between anti-group behavior and conflict. Conflict is a healthy form of communication on teams when managed properly.

Remarks:

This lesson activity should follow an introduction to task and relationship roles on teams. It should not be presented in isolation from an understanding of positive roles.

References:

Fisher & Ury, *Getting to Yes.* Houghton Mifflin, 1981.

Janis, *Victims of Groupthink.* Houghton Mifflin, 1972.

ANTI-GROUP ROLES

Anti-group roles do not contribute to the well-being of the group or the group's ability to accomplish a task. These roles consist of behaviors that attempt to satisfy individual rather than group needs, which are often irrelevant to accomplishing the task, and are not oriented toward maintaining the group as a team.

Behaviors associated with anti-group roles include the following:

- **Blocking:** refusing to accept the ideas or opinions of others in the group, indulging in negative and stubbornly resistant behavior including unfounded opposition to ideas, preventing the group from achieving consensus, etc.

  Favorite expressions:
  "No way."
  "Never."

- **Withdrawing:** refusing to contribute to the group's interaction, avoiding the topic, pouting, expressing cynicism or nonchalance, "goofing-off," etc.

  Favorite expressions:
  "Oh, I don't care - it never really matters."
  "It will never work."

- **Recognition Seeker:** boasting, reporting on personal achievements, focusing exclusively on personal ideas, calling attention to personal achievements, etc.

  Favorite expressions:
  "My idea is..."
  "My way..."

- **Distracter:** going off on tangents, telling stupid stories, and wasting the group's time

  Favorite expressions:
  "That reminds me..."

CULTURE AND STRUCTURE PICTURE

Learning Goals:

- To visualize the structure and culture of the workplace
- To discuss the "team" nature of this culture

Level: ■

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Flip chart paper, colored markers, colored paper, stickers, string, etc. for creative work

Learning Activity:

Ask students to write about the culture and structure of their workplace. Lead a group discussion about what they have written. Have the students work together to draw a visual representation of the structure and culture.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Who works in teams?
2. At your workplace, is work centralized or departmentalized?
3. Who solves problems in your workplace?
4. Where do you fit in this picture?
5. Would you like this picture to look differently? Why?

*** Variations** If the group of students is from one department, ask them to look at the structure and culture of their department.

Remarks: This activity encourages a left brain and right brain method of building awareness of "teams" within a workplace or the team environment of a workplace.

References: 4Mat Styles

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS

Learning Goals:

- To introduce students to the key characteristics of high performance teams
- To introduce students to a process to examine their own teams.

Level: ■

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Flip chart paper,handout 6A

Learning Activity:

Ask students to think of a team or a group that they have worked on (or played with) that was a top performing group. It could be a sports team, a scout troop, or a work group. In groups of two to three students ask them to tell each other about the team, and describe why it was so good. The group should take notes on the characteristics of the team. As a larger group list the characteristics of the teams the class identified as outstanding. Ask if there are any more characteristics the class would like to add.
Introduce the class to the research on teams conducted by Carl Larson and Frank LaFasto. This research identified the characteristics of successful teams. Use the handout for students to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their teams related to the top two characteristics.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Why are team goals so critical to team success?
2. What can you do to improve your team's structure (keeping notes, providing feedback on the team process...)

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

Dr. Carl Larson and Dr. Frank LaFasto have conducted research with over hundreds of high performing teams. Below is a listing of the eight characteristics that distinguish top teams. According to Larson and LaFasto, while all eight are important, the top three are critical. The next page provides some questions you can ask yourself about those top three characteristics.

CLEAR, ELEVATING GOAL

RESULTS-DRIVEN STRUCTURE

COMPETENT TEAM MEMBERS

UNIFIED COMMITMENT

COLLABORATIVE CLIMATE

STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

EXTERNAL SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION

PRINCIPLED LEADERSHIP

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

Think about your work team and rate it from 1-4 along the top two characteristics which are listed below. (Characteristic dimensions adapted from Teamwork: What Must Go Right/What Can Go Wrong, Sage, 1989 by Larson and LaFasto).

CLEAR, ELEVATING GOAL

Our team has a clear goal — no.....yes

Our goal is appealing

- our purpose is worth the effort — no.....yes
- we have a chance to do our best work — no.....yes

There are clear consequences connected with our team's success in achieving the goal. — no.....yes

STRUCTURE OF OUR TEAM

Our team design is determined by the results we need to achieve, rather than by other considerations. (Example: the people who need to be on our team are on it) — no.....yes

Members of the team have clear roles — no.....yes

Members of the team have accountability to the team success — no.....yes

Our communication system on the team provides

- access to information — no.....yes
- credible information — no.....yes
- a process to document our decisions — no.....yes
- opportunity to raise issues that aren't on the agenda — no.....yes

Our decision making process encourages

- fact-based decisions — no.....yes

We have established methods for giving each other feedback on individual performance — no.....yes

COMPETENT TEAM MEMBERS

We have the skills and abilities we need to accomplish our objectives — no.....yes

Our team members demonstrate a strong desire to contribute to team success. — no.....yes

We are confident of each others' abilities. — no.....yes

We are capable of collaborating with each other — no.....yes

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CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE, COLLABORATIVE TEAM MEMBERS

Learning Goals:
- To understand the characteristics that promote teamwork success

Level: ■

Group Size: 3 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Flip chart paper, colored markers, colored paper, stickers, string, etc. for creative work

Learning Activity:

Ask students to imagine they are choosing a new team member of a work group. Ask them to list the characteristics that they would want in the new member and how they would know someone had that characteristic. Write an example on the board

> Characteristic: willing to surface issues we might otherwise ignore
> How demonstrated: brings up hard questions in a non-defensive and non-threatening way

Introduce the key characteristics identified through research by and compare these characteristics to the ones generated in class. Break the class into teams of 2-3 students and ask them to identify the characteristics they want to develop in themselves as a team member.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What characteristics are most critical on teams that you participate with?
2. What can you do to help others in the class develop their team skills?

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE, COLLABORATIVE TEAM MEMBERS

Dr. Carl Larson of the University of Denver has conducted research with over 15,000 team members. Here are the characteristics people use to describe effective, collaborative members. Think of examples of when you have seen these characteristics in action.

OPEN

surfaces issues
talks it over
acknowledges/ understands other perspectives
challengeable
listens

SUPPORTIVE

stands up for the team
manages personal control needs
adapts to changing team needs
makes it safe for others to contribute

PERSONAL INITIATIVE

Takes action
repeats efforts
achievement oriented
takes risks
seeks personal accountability

POSITIVE STYLE

Energizing
fun and relaxed
level-headed
other-oriented
confident
optimistic
warm and approachable

Remember: Developing teamwork skills means supporting others as they try out new behaviors and being willing to take risks. It is important to keep focused on what the team is trying to achieve and how your contribution will help to accomplish the goal.

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BUILDING SKILLS

Building Skills

A greater awareness of team concepts is the foundation for building skills to contribute effectively on a team. Research has found that doing teams well means making sure team members have the basic skills to take on new challenges.

These activities focus on the practice and application of team skills such as consensus building, collaboration, group dynamics, managing conflict, perception, problem solving, goal setting, creative thinking, and building team morale.

As a society that values rugged individualism, developing and fostering successful team skills can be a challenge. However, once mastered, team skills have a variety of practical applications inside and outside of the workplace, including sport teams, church groups, and community organizations. Someone who has effective team skills will be a valued contributor to a more successful group.

JURY SIMULATION

Learning Goals:

- To practice consensus in a real-life situation
- To understand the complexity of reaching consensus versus voting

Level: ◆

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 15 - 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Lead the class in a discussion of a commonly known jury case. Ask the students to think of some of the known facts of the case and list them on the board. Have the "jury" try to reach a consensus about the guilt or innocence of the defendant.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Why is voting inappropriate in deciding the fate of a person in a court of law?
2. Does everyone agree with the verdict?
3. What are some of the barriers to reaching consensus? How did you resolve those issues?
4. How can you use some of the information learned in this activity to reach consensus at work?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: The "jury" is usually unable to reach consensus in any predetermined amount of time. Use this as an illustration of why reaching consensus can be difficult as compared to voting.

References: None

CREATE A COMMERCIAL

Learning Goals:
- To work on establishing and achieving team goals
- To reinforce team building skills

Level: ◆

Group Size: 3 or more students

Time: 20 - 40 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Have the class create a commercial for a product or service the company offers. The class is given only the following information about the assignment: *"As a team, come up with a television commercial for a product/service and present it. You have 25 minutes."* Observe them during this activity and take notes relevant to information previously learned in a team building class (brainstorming, reaching consensus, characteristics of a good leader, etc.).

*** Discussion Questions**

1. How did the team achieve its goal?
2. Was everyone satisfied? Why does this matter on a team?
3. Did everyone participate?

*** Variations** Time given to "produce" the commercial may be longer or shorter according to instructional needs and goals.

Remarks: Give the class a time limit so the activity does not get "out of hand."

References: None

TEAM TRIVIAL PURSUIT

Learning Goals:

- To learn how to reach consensus
- To understand the importance of consensus to team morale

Level: ■

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 20 - 40 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Trivial Pursuit Board Game

Learning Activity:

Split the class into two or more groups. Each team should have a minimum of two members, preferably three. Goal: First team to come up with 10 correct answers wins.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What did you do when you couldn't decide on the right answer?
2. How did you make team decisions?
3. Did you choose a leader?
4. Did the team recognize each member's strengths?
5. Did you have a situation where the wrong answer was chosen by the team?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This activity works very well to show why consensus is important, especially if one person on the team calls out an answer without consulting the team.

References: None

THE CORPORATE PULL

Learning Goals:

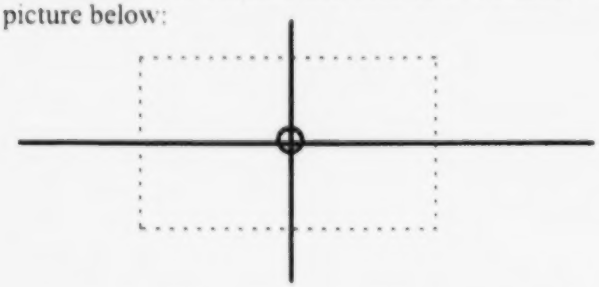
- To introduce participants to the dynamics of problem solving
- To practice creative thinking
- To explore the dynamics of leadership
- To illustrate the value of collaboration in teamwork

Level: ●

Group Size: 6 to 15 students

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Four (20 ft. long/1" thick) ropes securely attached to a center point. A cord, rope, or webbing that can be made into the shape of a square and used as a "boundary." See picture below:



Learning Activity:

Divide the group into four teams of equal number. Put each of the teams at each end of the ropes. Have each team function as a "department" in a company, such as accounting, sales, manufacturing, or administration.

Tell the "employees" the following: *"Each time the center-point of the ropes passes over a boundary, $10,000 is earned. For example, if accounting moves the center over the boundary 4 times, $40,000 is made."*

Be sure to be very vague about who will make the money. Most people will assume that they need to make more money than the other departments, and a tug-of-war ensues.

- Round 1: Give them 45 seconds to see how much money is made. Usually on the first round, very little cooperation is happening, and the count is around 5-15.
- Round 2: Tell them that they need to double the amount from last time, but they'll have less time to do it. Give them 30 seconds. They will usually begin to figure out

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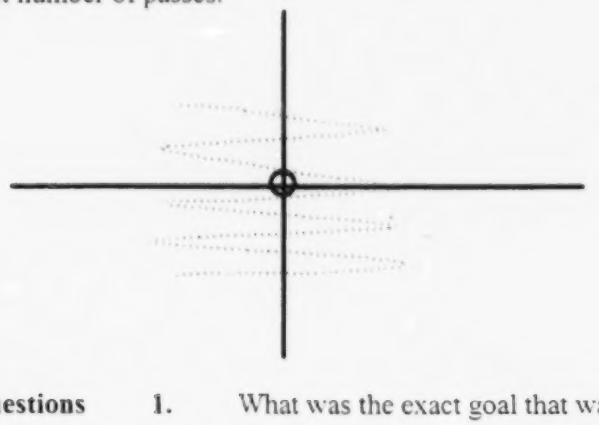
how to make it over the boundary faster and can achieve this goal. If not, keep pushing for it.

- Round 3 & 4: Keep asking them to double their output, and keep dropping the time by five second intervals.
- Where to end up: Hopefully by the end, they will be fully cooperating to maximize the number of passes over the boundary and no longer be concerned with which department is actually making the money for the company--it is a team effort. Successful teams usually have only two or three people actually handling the rope passing: they will be at a corner of the boundary, and they will have asked if they can actually move the boundary.

See the figure below. Notice how the boundary of the rope has been moved from a perfect square into a zigzag shape. The logic is that the initial rule was: *"Each time the center-point of the ropes passes over a boundary $10,000 is earned. For example, if accounting moves the center point over their boundary 4 times, $10,000 is made."* In the figure, one pass across the ropes will make $80,000. By round 5 or so, it will be too hard to count the exact number of passes.



*** Discussion Questions**

1. What was the exact goal that was set?
2. Did you reach the goal differently than when you started?
3. Did someone have a solution early in the exercise? Did anyone listen to that person's solution?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: As with all experiential activities, make sure that you carefully explain the rules. If someone specifically asks if they can move the rope, simply repeat the instructions and let them infer the meaning.

References: None

TEAMWORK: OBJECTIVES AND RESOURCES

Learning Goals:

- To practice creative problem solving
- To increase understanding of group dynamics
- To practice listening skills
- To increase understanding of perception and interpretation

Level: ■

Group Size: 5 or more students

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Carpet squares (or an equivalent) at least one foot square in size. At least one carpet square per two participants.

Learning Activity:

Ask the group to gather around you. When you discuss the rules of this activity, make sure you wave the carpet squares around so that the participants are focused on the carpet.

Set up this activity as a corporate budget. Tell them that they have to run their department and complete their regular job with two resources. The first resource is the carpet squares. The second resource is each other.

"The objective is to get everyone off the ground, simultaneously, for the count of three." Make absolutely certain that you recite this objective verbatim! Repeat it several times, and ask the group to recite it back to you.

Toss the carpet squares in front of the participants at a ratio of about one carpet square per two people. Give them a few minutes to plan how they will go about solving the problem. Usually, two people will share one square and someone will count off three seconds.

After the first round, take a couple of the carpet squares away, repeat the objective and their resources, and give them some time to discuss and implement their idea. Compare this carpet "stealing" to the resource cutting that many companies experience. Repeat the step until they run out of carpet squares.

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Safety note: DO NOT let participants lift, carry or piggyback each other. Thank them for their creative ideas, but tell them this activity can be solved without resorting to lifting people.

The solution is that everyone jumps off the ground and somebody calls out "1-2-3" very quickly or just "Three!" Nowhere in the objective does it say that you have to use the carpet squares or that you have to count for *three seconds*.

Note: Almost without fail, someone will have the solution very early on, but nobody listens. Make sure you discuss this point!

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Who heard that you *had* to use carpet squares?
2. Who heard that you had to be in the air for *three seconds*?
3. Who had the solution early on?
4. Did anyone listen to them?
5. Was there any conflict of ideas/personalities?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This activity can have a variety of interpretations; it is crucial that you give the instructions exactly as written above. Often people will become frustrated and blame you for changing the objective. This is why you repeat it several times and ask them to repeat it back to you throughout the activity.

References: None

PATHWAYS OF TEAM COMMUNICATION

Learning Goals:

- To understand the importance of every team member's contribution
- To build awareness of group dynamics

Level: ■

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Flip chart paper and markers

Learning Activity:

Ask students to discuss a team project or a topic relevant to this particular class. While they are having the discussion, diagram their discussion on a piece of flip chart paper. Represent each person with a dot, and draw arrows to indicate comments coming to or going from each person. The result is a *sociogram* which will represent the "frequency and direction of comments made." When the discussion has finished, post the diagram of their conversation and address the following questions:

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What do you see from the diagram of your discussion?
2. Was there a leader or facilitator? Who spoke the most? Was this person the leader or facilitator?
3. Did everyone contribute equally? Was everyone involved in the discussion?

*** Variations**

Have students in a large class track the pathways of communication in this way and share the information with the class. This exercise works effectively with groups. They can see their pathways of conversation represented. The perception of who spoke the most is often different than the reality. Use this activity to build awareness in groups where one person often dominates the conversation or group discussion. A follow-up to this activity would involve discussion of team communication skills.

Remarks: None

References:

Clark, Neil, *Team Building. A Practical Guide for Trainers*, New York: The McGraw-Hill Training Series, 1994.

PERCEPTION WARM-UP

Learning Goals:

- To develop listening skills
- To introduce the concepts of perception and interpretation

Level: ■

Group Size: 3 or more students

Time: 5 - 10 minutes

Preparation and Materials: You will need 10 "Magic Number Sticks" made of any material—the size of a pencil, dowel rods or pick up sticks. Make certain that the sticks look as much alike as possible.

Learning Activity:

Ask the group get into a circle sitting on the floor and give instructions in a serious manner (see **Remarks** for *exact* verbal instructions). Lay the sticks down on the floor in front of you in a totally random pattern. However, give the appearance that you are carefully considering the placement of each stick. Remember, the pattern of the sticks is irrelevant, but give the appearance that it is.

When you have arranged the sticks, place your hands down on the floor in front of you and very subtlety show a number from 0-10 *with your fingers*. It is good to start with the number ten and simply spread your fingers out, but *do not draw attention to your hands.* Ask the group, *"What is the number that **I am** showing you?"* Obviously, they will be completely focused on the random pattern in the sticks, rather than the ten fingers you are showing on the floor.

Go around the circle nodding to each person to venture a guess on the number. When everyone has guessed, tell them, *"The number I am showing you is ten."* Give them a moment to think about the number and repeat the above steps 2-3 times, changing the stick pattern each time. After 3-4 turns, begin taking away the sticks a couple at a time and repeat the above steps.

Some people might figure out that the number comes from your fingers, rather than the random stick placement. See ***Variations** on how to handle this situation.

As you take sticks away, emphasize the way you *say "What is the number that **I** am showing you."* After you are left with 3-4 sticks, take them all away at once and ask the

same question. Usually, the people that are still having trouble will have their eyes light up with understanding.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What was I really saying?

2. How were you interpreting what I said?

*** Variations**

When it appears that someone has figured out the solution you can either ask them to hold onto the answer, or you can give them the option to share it with one person.

Remarks:

As with all experiential exercises, it is crucial that the wording be exact! The following script should be used.

"These are magic number sticks. These sticks have been genetically engineered to be perfect in every way. They are the same in color, size, length, weight, atomic and chemical composition."

"I will place these magic number sticks in a pattern on the floor in front of you. When I'm done placing these magic number sticks in a pattern, I will put my hands down on the floor to show you that I'm done. ***I will be showing you a number****. Then, we'll go around the circle. I'll nod my head at you, and you tell me the number that* ***I am showing you****."*

References:

None

WARP SPEED

Learning Goals:

- To develop problem solving skills on tea[illegible]
- To encourage creative thinking among team members
- To analyze team and leadership dynamics
- To develop group interaction

Level: ●

Group Size: 6 to 15 students

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Preparation and Materials: A soft, easy-to-catch object (a "koosh" ball or small stuffed animal works well)

Learning Activity:

Ask the group to stand in a circle. Tell them that they will be tossing the koosh-ball around the circle. Frame the exercise by explaining that the koosh-ball represents a "customer" in their company and that each person represents a different department within the company. As such, everyone's input and service to the "customer" is vital to winning and keeping this "million dollar customer." You can even have them say "hello" to the "customer" as each participant receives the ball.

Let them know that they will be establishing a "pattern" in the circle and they need to remember who they toss the ball to and who they receive it from. Have them pass the koosh-ball around the circle so that everyone has customer contact only one time and the koosh-ball comes back to you. Repeat this pattern a couple of times.

Now, add an additional framework: Two important factors in a successful business are quality of service and speed of service. In this exercise, poor quality is represented by dropping the koosh-ball. You are now ready to time the event and see how quickly they can give quality service to each "customer." Say, *"Now, the objective is to give the quickest, highest quality service to this customer. The rule is that everyone needs to touch the koosh-ball in the order that we've established."* Repeat the rule several times, and ask the participants to repeat the rule back to you. Then, time the event.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What was the exact goal that was set?

2. Did you reach that goal differently than when you started?

3. Did someone have a solution early in the exercise?

4. Did anyone listen to that person's solution?

5. How did you speed up the service and maintain quality? How can you do this in your company?

*** Variations**

Use multiple objects. Either request that they all go in the same direction or send one backwards, or assign a different pattern to each object. These are very difficult but can be used for fun/laughter when they go 12 different ways.

Remarks:

The key words in the instructions are "*touch the koosh-ball,*" not throw it. Soon, the group will realize they don't have to be in a circle or throw the ball to each other.

They will usually end up being in a tight circle, a straight line, or will change the order that they stand. They will also usually resort to passing or rolling the koosh-ball from person to person.

Remember to encourage them to move around and use the koosh-ball differently, but make sure they do follow the rule that *everyone needs to touch the koosh-ball in the order that was established.* As long as what they are doing fits that rule, anything goes! An average time is under 2 seconds. DO NOT SHARE THIS WITH THE GROUP.

Debriefing may consist of discussions surrounding team problem solving, group dynamics, leadership, and "thinking outside the box" to look at issues of quality and service.

References:

None

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REFLECTION & LEARNING

Reflection and Learning

To survive, employees in team-based organizations must learn. Meaningful contributions from each team member are expected in the workplace, and continuous learning fosters team communication competence.

Successful teams require team members who can analyze team processes, interaction, and decisions and learn from past performance. Reflection and learning activities emphasize these critical skills with an emphasis on analysis and evaluation of team goals, team performance, underlying assumptions and motivations of team members, and self-managing teams.

TEAM GOAL CARD

Learning Goals:

- To set goals for the class
- To reach consensus on the team's goals and ratings

Level: ●

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 20 - 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Flip chart paper, markers, and index cards

Learning Activity:

Discuss the skills and concepts to be covered in the team building class. Ask students to write down on an index card three or four things that they personally hope to work on in this class (problem solving, conflict management, collaboration, etc.). Ask them to rate themselves on a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest) in the areas they chose. Lead students in sharing their comments and ratings.

Then, give the students a sheet of flip chart paper and ask them to decide which goals they would like to work on as a group. Once decided, they should also rate themselves as a team. In the last class, revisit the team goal card, and ask the class to discuss their goals and agree on new ratings. This can be used as a pre-/post- classroom assessment.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Are you in agreement on the goals? Are you in agreement on the ratings?
2. How did you reach agreement?
3. Do you feel like you compromised while coming up with your team goals or ratings?
4. Is anyone dissatisfied with the team goal card?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This activity facilitates discussion on reaching consensus, but it is used primarily as a culminating activity in a first class on team skills. It helps participants see that the class

members truly are a team. Post the team goal card in each class so participants will keep them in mind during training.

References: None

TEAM LOG

Learning Goals:

- To evaluate the class as a team
- To foster team awareness

Level: ●

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 10 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Student Daily Log*

Learning Activity:

At the end of each class session, ask students to work as a team to fill out the student daily log.

***Discussion Questions:** None

*** Variations** Use class assessments as team projects. For example, the class, as a team, could all agree on a one-word summary of the class and explain why. They could collaborate on the clearest and muddiest points. They could also create a pro and con list for class that day.

Remarks: It is important to have participants work as a team. Use every opportunity to make this happen. Participants can use these classroom opportunities to build on and practice skills learned in class.

References:

Angelo & Cross, *Classroom Assessment Techniques*.

EVALUATION
STUDENT DAILY LOG

NAME:

DATE:

1. What did you learn today? What did you find useful about the lesson? How was it interesting?

2. What did you find not necessarily useful? What could have been done to improve the effectiveness of the lesson?

3. What other reactions do you have to the class, materials, discussion, etc.?

4. How have you used any of the information learned in previous classes? How might you use the information you learned today?

ASSUMPTIONS IN TEAM RELATIONSHIPS

Learning Goals:

- To develop awareness of expectations and assumptions
- To develop an understanding of how assumptions frame team communication

Level: ■

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 1 hour

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Assumptions in Team Relationships*

Learning Activity:

This exercise is designed to help students become more aware of the major assumptions guiding their thoughts and behaviors in team relationships. They will explore their assumptions through an individual and group analysis of a critical incident. Use the following framework to set up this activity.

STAGE ONE: *Writing a critical incident*
Think of a time on a team or in a small group when you knew things were going well. You can think of an incident at work or outside of work. Write down a detailed description of the event (not more than a page). Be as open or as guarded as you wish. When you have completed the above critical incident, think of a time on a team when things weren't working out. Write a detailed description of this event (again, not more than one page).

STAGE TWO: *Introducing the concept of assumptions*
After students have written at least one critical incident, introduce the concept of assumptions in communication. Discuss how assumptions, or our general beliefs or ideas, guide our actions. It may be helpful to use an example illustrating the role of assumptions in communication or a handout to guide this part of the discussion.

STAGE THREE: *Examining assumptions*
Ask students to find two other participants and form a group of three. Give the students the following instructions:
1. Each person reads his or her description.
2. The two partners listen carefully to the critical incident.

3. The two partners identify the assumptions about appropriate behavior on teams they believe are embedded in the reader's description. The reader listens carefully to the discussion but does not participate or provide further detail.

STAGE FOUR: *Discussing assumptions*
After the student's description has been analyzed by group members, give each student the opportunity to comment on the assumptions the group identified:
1. Did the group accurately identify your assumptions?
2. Did the group's understanding of your assumptions surprise you?
3. Did the assumptions they identified match your view of your assumptions?

STAGE FIVE: *Wrap-Up*
Ask students to rejoin as a larger group and discuss the following questions:
1. What assumptions about working in teams were commonly identified?
2. How well did the group members do at identifying underlying assumptions?

***Discussion Questions** Above

***Variations** None

Remarks: None

References:

Brookfield, Stephen. "Using Critical Incidents to Explore Learners' Assumptions" in *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood.* Edited by Mezirow and Associates.

ASSUMPTIONS IN TEAM RELATIONSHIPS

Specific Actions Taken	Possible Assumptions Underlying
Example: Helped team member to solve a problem.	*-Good team members go beyond the "expected"* *-Team members are supposed to help each other.*

THE SELF-DIRECTED WORK TEAM

Learning Goals:

- To introduce participants to the concept of self-directed work teams
- To introduce participants to the kinds of challenges members of self-directed teams face

Level: ◆

Group Size: 3 or more students

Time: 30 - 45 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *The Self-Directed Work Team* and *Characteristics of Self-Managing Teams*

Learning Activity:

This activity is designed for learners who are working in self-directed team environments.

PART ONE: Introduce the concept of self-directed work teams by facilitating a discussion that draws from learners' experiences and the reading.

PART TWO: Display the list of ideas generated by the students. *"With this list of ideas and tasks, let's take a look at the challenges team members face."* Display the list of challenges from the handout. Ask learners to add any challenges they think should be included in the list. Divide the group into subgroups of 3-4 students, and instruct learners in each group to choose two challenges they think are especially critical. Each group should do all of the following steps:

1. Read the section on the challenges they are interested in.
2. Summarize each challenge in their own words.
3. Identify ways to build skills to overcome each challenge.

PART THREE: Ask each small group to report out by summarizing the two challenges they chose to analyze and discussing ways to build skills that will overcome the challenges. Then summarize the major challenges and note specific recommendations from students.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What are self-managing teams? (draw on learners' experiences and the reading for background)
2. How many companies are moving to this way of organizing work?

3. Why are companies making the shift?

4. What are the tasks of self-managing team members in this organization?

***Variations** None

Remarks: None

References: See handout

THE SELF-DIRECTED WORK TEAM

"Almost every major U.S. corporation is seriously considering work teams."
Manz and Sims, 1993

Confronted with international competition, turbulent workplace demographics, shortened product cycles, and customer service demands, thousands of manufacturing companies have been turning to self-directed work teams. A 1992 Sloan School of Management survey of 694 offices and factories found that more than half the firms surveyed are using self-managing teams to some degree and forty percent are using them extensively (Osterman, 1994).

Why are so many organizations embracing self-managing teams? Research over the last forty years, starting with studies in coal mines in England, indicates that employees on self-managing teams tend to be more satisfied, productive, and committed to their organizations. For example, a 1994 large scale study of self-managing teams found that employees on teams are more satisfied and consider themselves more productive than do employees in traditionally managed groups (Cohen and Ledford, 1994).

What are self-managing teams?

Although a variety of definitions of self-managing teams exist, the two central defining characteristics of a self-managing team are (1) a high degree of team decision making power and (2) opportunities for self-control within a work group (Manz and Newstrom, 1990).

The day-to-day work life on a self-managed team is vastly different than life in a traditionally managed work group. Generally, self-managing team members participate in groups of 10 to 15 people who take on the responsibilities of their former supervisors. Instead of being told what to do, team members must gather and synthesize information, act on it and take collective responsibility for their actions. Below is a list of some of the responsibilities of self-managed teams (Glaser, 1991).

- prepare budgets
- keep records
- keep work time
- control quality
- control inventory
- monitor performance
- train members
- select new members
- orient new members
- plan work/set goals
- resolve conflicts
- correct performance
- solve technical problems
- order materials/supplies
- discipline members
- control absence/tardiness
- assign jobs

The degree of autonomy varies greatly depending on the team or the organization. In a fully autonomous team, the group has the ability to formulate work goals; govern performance, including where to work, when to work, and on which activities to work; choose the production method; decide how to distribute tasks within the group; determine its membership; decide whether it will have a leader and what the leader will do; and decide how the individual work operations will be performed.

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Very few self-managed teams are fully autonomous. In practice, teams fall somewhere along a continuum which ranges from a traditional work group to a fully autonomous team (Figure A).

Figure A

Traditional Hierarchical Structure	Participative Team Management	Semi-autonomous Work Group	Fully Autonomous Team

Challenges for team members

A senior manager quoted in Hackman (1986) states, "The question for today's managers is not *whether* to design organizations for involvement and self-management, but *how* to do it and how to do it well." One conclusion of the research is that doing teams well means making sure team members have the basic skills to take on new challenges.

Learning to cope with change

Team members must learn to adapt to a constantly changing team environment and develop the skill and attitude that enable them to cope effectively with change. Changes such as new group membership, changing work demands, and learning new skills are constant.

Learning new technical skills

Most self-managing systems have instituted "pay for skill" systems. Workers who can do more jobs within a team are paid for this ability. Rather than moving up to increase their salaries, employees earn pay increases by demonstrating the competence and flexibility to move laterally.

The need to learn new tasks often requires that workers brush up on basic skills or master new skills to do a job which was always delegated to someone else. For example, in a production plant with a large Spanish-speaking workforce, a handful of employees with good skills in English may have always filled out paperwork for employees with limited command of English. As self-managing team members, all employees should be competent with the paper work.

Learning to accept responsibility for the group's work

As managers give up control, team members need to accept it. In addition to learning all the jobs on the team, members must take on the new responsibility for setting behavioral norms for the group and for accepting responsibility for the group's work.

Lacking adequate practice in taking initiative can also be a barrier to team self management. Relatively few team members today have experience in self-direction. Most have worked in environments which value following directions above taking initiative.

Learning to communicate effectively on teams

Learning to communicate effectively on teams

Research on workforce needs indicates that even though team members may have superior technical skills, they often lack the decision making, conflict resolution, hiring and evaluation, meeting management, and feedback skills needed for successful self-managing teams. "Technical operations are a piece of cake, but developing the team will keep you awake at night," (Manz and Newstrom, 1990).

Learning to use data

To support teams in monitoring their performance, most organizations have well-defined feedback systems. These feedback systems typically provide data on items such as production, safety, absenteeism, or scrap. Case studies of successful teams and extensive research highlight the importance of easily accessible and credible information (Larson and LaFasto, 1989). To use these systems, many members must learn, "you can't chart defect trend levels unless you know some basic math and statistical process control," (Case, 1993).

Learning to take corrective action

One of the most challenging roles required of self-managing team members is discipline of team members (Manz and Sims 1993). In teams with leaders, Larson and LaFasto (1989) found that the most severe complaint about team leadership from team members involves, "leaders who are unwilling to confront and resolve issues associated with inadequate performance by team members." On self-managing teams, the responsibility for dealing with these thorny issues shifts to the members themselves.

Learning to persuade

When team members do not have what they need to perform well, they should be able to actively seek from the organization the guidance, help, or resources they need. They must do so constructively and assertively.

This demand means that team members need skills in problem identification, persuasive communication, and giving formal and informal presentations.

Learning to teach

Effective team members generally take initiative to help people in other areas improve their performance (Manz and Newstrom, 1990). Team members need coaching and teaching skills to help others learn. More than just being good at their job, they need to be good at teaching newcomers.

However, most research agrees that the teaching role is secondary to other team member responsibilities. Therefore, team members need skill in setting priorities and saying no if their primary work responsibilities will go unmet if they take on new responsibilities.

To survive, employees in team-based organizations must learn. Likewise, workplace educators working in these dynamic organizations must commit themselves to learning and exploration. Marvin Weibord, a business owner who has experimented with teams for three decades, advises, "there are no textbooks for this, because nobody knows the right amount or how fast is enough. You can't do my experiment. You have to do your own."

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CHARACTERISTICS OF SELF-MANAGING TEAMS

TEAM CHARACTERISTICS (Glaser, 1994)	TEAM CHARACTERISTICS (Glaser, 1994)
(1) Teams are responsible for completing a specific, relatively whole job task	(2) Team members are supposed to be capable of performing any task required to achieve the team's goal
(3) Team members have authority to make decisions which have traditionally been made by a supervisor	(4) In addition to, or in place of, individual evaluation, feedback and evaluation considers the performance of the whole team